

NAVY PROGRAMS

Amphibious Helicopter Assault Ship (Replacement) (LHA(R))

Amphibious Helicopter Assault Ship (Replacement) (LHA(R)) is the Navy's next class of amphibious assault ships and will replace the amphibious lift capability of the retiring *Tarawa* LHA 1 Class. This class will be gas turbine-powered and will launch pre-loaded assault craft (amphibious vehicles and landing craft), tilt-rotor aircraft, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles. In addition to transporting and deploying the combat ground elements of Marine Expeditionary Units/Brigades, short-take-off/vertical-landing fixed-wing and rotary wing aircraft will provide combat support to forces ashore. Furthermore, it is intended that this ship must conduct simultaneous day and night, well-deck and flight-deck operations and have Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence capabilities sufficient to support United States Marine Corps concepts of Operational Maneuver from the Sea/Ship-to-Objective Maneuver operations.

The LHA(R) Mission Need Statement was approved in March 2001. Milestone A occurred in July 2001. Alternative ship concepts evaluated in the Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) include a slightly modified LHD 8 (Amphibious Helicopter-Dock Ship) Class Ship, larger modified LHD 8 variants (LHD-“Plug +”), a larger, more capable “dual tramline” design, and replacement with two modified LPD 17s (Amphibious Transport Dock Ships). The schedule is uncertain as of this writing; Detail Design and Construction could occur as early as FY06 or as late as FY08.

TEST & EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

FY02 activity consisted largely of meetings between representatives from the LHA(R) program office and Navy staffs to identify in detail those operational test and Live Fire Test and Evaluation (LFT&E) program issues, including its scope, content, and approval requirements, that must be addressed in the Evaluation Strategy. This is a key document, since a Test and Evaluation Master Plan is not required until Milestone B, which could be as late as FY06, depending on the overall schedule. The Navy remains delinquent in the delivery of an Evaluation Strategy for the LHA(R) to OSD for approval.

TEST & EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

The effectiveness of the LFT&E program for the LHA(R) will be particularly sensitive to early implementation of many of the LFT&E program elements, since significant results would impact the ship's design. In particular, four of these elements that need to be completed prior to Milestone B are surrogate testing, carried-weapons analyses and testing, Milestone B Vulnerability Assessment Report, and DOT&E approval of an LFT&E Management Plan. The decisions on how these LFT&E elements will be applied will be contained in the LFT&E Strategy.



The Amphibious Helicopter Assault Ship Tarawa (LHA 1) underway with a full head of steam. The new gas turbine-powered LHA(R) Class will replace the current five ships of the LHA 1 Class.

